

Appl. No. 09/869,723  
Amdt. dated November 12, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of Sept. 30, 2003

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the sentence of the specification starting in line 5 of page 30 and ending in line 7 of page 30 by the following amended sentence:

The fibers 38, 40 are properly aligned with each other in the middle region 40 with the use of positioning devices 31, ~~32~~ 33 provided with suitable alignment slots, such as 54, so that they are held in parallel contact with each other.